



Asbestos in the Home

Information for Council tenants

Many of our properties were built using some materials that contain asbestos. This leaflet explains why most asbestos is not a cause for concern and tells you how to avoid possible danger to your own and your family's health.

This leaflet tells you:

- What asbestos is
- Where you might find it
- What the risks are
- How we manage asbestos
- What you should do

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral that is found in rocks around the world. It is cheap, strong and heat resistant so was widely used in homes and other buildings from the 1930s until the mid 1980s. A lot of our housing was built or refurbished during this time, so some properties do contain asbestos materials.

Using asbestos in construction was banned in the United Kingdom in 1999.

Where is Asbestos usually found?

Asbestos can be found in various places around the home. This diagram shows some of the common locations, but asbestos can also be found in other areas of your home as well as garages and sheds.



1. Cold water tanks
2. Lagging
3. Insulation
4. Artex wall and ceiling finishes
5. Soffit boards
6. WC cisterns
7. Wall cladding sheets
8. Wall boards/internal partitions
9. Central heating boilers
10. Floor tiles and vinyl
11. Rainwater pipes and gutters

What are the risks?

Asbestos is not a danger to your health if it is in good condition and is left undisturbed. If it is damaged or its condition deteriorates, then you and others may be at risk. Worn or damaged asbestos materials may release fibres into the air, which could cause lung damage if you breathe them in. Asbestos can even cause asbestosis or lung cancer. This is only likely to happen if you are exposed to airborne asbestos on several occasions and over a long period of time, usually many years.

How we manage asbestos

Our policy is to leave materials containing asbestos in place whilst they remain in good condition and are not likely to be disturbed. This complies with legislation and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidance.

Asbestos was used so widely in the building trade for such a long time that removing it from all homes isn't practical. Our contractors assess homes for asbestos before starting any improvement or alteration work. They must ensure that their work would not affect any asbestos that is present and that it is in a safe condition.

It is important to remember that as long as asbestos is in good condition and undisturbed it does not pose a risk to health.

What you should do

You must not carry out any alterations, improvements or additions to the property without first obtaining our written approval. (This is a condition of your tenancy agreement.)

If you want to carry out any home improvements you must contact your Housing Officer and request a 'Tenant Request for Improvements Form'. We will not permit you to carry out any work on asbestos-containing materials because this could put people's health at risk.

If asbestos may be present then proper controls are needed to reduce exposure to you, your family and the person carrying out the work (if not yourself). It is important to remember:

- Keep DIY activities to a minimum in any areas where asbestos may be present.
- Do not drill, saw, scrub or sand anything that could contain asbestos.
- Do not remove old floor tiles or linoleum because these may contain asbestos.
- Do not dust, sweep or use your household vacuum cleaner to clear dust or debris that may contain asbestos.

For more information about asbestos in the home visit

www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos

If you need further advice please contact **Osborne Property Services** on **0800 0186050** and select **option 2**.